

Q8. How many other Chaplains have received the Medal of Honor?

A.8: ____ (answers from Historians)

Six Army chaplains have been awarded the Medal of Honor through the years. Most of them earned it for acts related to caring for the wounded—one of the core competencies of the Chaplain Corps.

Four Army chaplains earned the Medal of Honor during the Civil War. The first went to Chaplain John M. Whitehead of the 15th Indiana Infantry. At the Battle of Stone's River on December 31, 1862, Chaplain Whitehead went to the front under fire and unaided carried to the rear several wounded and helpless Soldiers. Chaplain Francis B. Hall of the 16th New York Infantry performed similar acts in rescuing wounded men a few months later at Salem Heights, Virginia. James Hill of the 21st Iowa Infantry earned the Medal of Honor in May 1863 for capturing enemy pickets at the Battle of Champion Hill, although it should be noted that Hill was serving as an infantry lieutenant at that time; later during the war he became his regiment's chaplain. Milton L. Haney of the 55th Illinois was his unit's chaplain at the Battle of Atlanta in 1864, although his bravery was for acts outside the scope of a chaplain's duties: he volunteered to serve as a rifleman in ranks and rendered heroic service in retaking a Federal position that the enemy had captured.

More recently, two Army chaplains earned the Medal of Honor during the Vietnam War. Chaplain (Major) Charles J. Watters, assigned to the 173rd Airborne Brigade, earned the medal on November 19, 1967, in Dak To Province by selflessly moving under fire to carry wounded Soldiers to safety. Just a couple of weeks later, Chaplain (Captain) Angelo J. Liteky of the 199th Infantry Brigade earned the Medal of Honor in Bien Hoa Province. Similar to the actions of Watters, Liteky moved under fire with disregard for his own safety, recovered numerous wounded men from exposed positions, directed medical evacuations, and inspired his fellow Soldiers with his courage and calm demeanor. Unlike Watters, however, Liteky survived his ordeal. Watters was fatally injured while giving aid to the wounded.